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19 MAR 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: IDEALIST Program

1. The attached information details the capabilities of the IDEALIST Program and the routine support it renders to the National Reconnaissance Program. Obviously, the IDEALIST Program is no longer the cornerstone of our reconnaissance effort; yet it does represent a quick reaction capability for point target coverage, which is unique, while maintaining readiness by the performance of routine test, evaluation and training efforts that enhance the technical capabilities of our satellite programs and our intelligence relationships with foreign countries. Its primary operational asset is the short line of command between the DCI and the operating elements.

2. Consideration of transfer to an organization not under the direct control of the DCI should assure the following:

a. Operational response time over target should not exceed the present 50 hour guarantee.

b. Political agreements for base rights must be consummated, which would recognize that these governments will dictate cover and operational constraints at the time of the operation, which must be honored and accommodated in the space of hours.

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Page 2

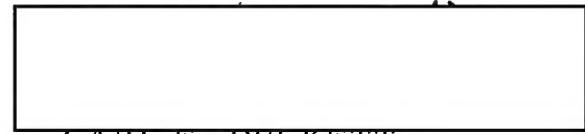
c. That Air Force or Defense budgets or operational requirements will not erode the requirements of the Intelligence Community as recognized by the USIB, NRO/EXCOM and the 40 Committee and reflected by the direction of the DCI.

d. Test programs necessary for the support of satellite systems will not compete with routine Air Force or Defense requirements, but will be directly responsive to the NRO.



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3. The problem of efficient utilization of the IDEALIST Program has been under almost constant review for the last 5 years. While it does contribute significantly to the national intelligence capability in many ways, it is recognized that a price is being paid for a contingency capability which can solve unique, yet highly critical problems. To date, it has appeared that administration of this capability by a small organization, staffed mostly by highly select Air Force officers, operating in a direct command line to the DCI, has been most efficient. However, if economies of operation can be effected by integration of all aircraft of similar type under one command, serious consideration should be given to this possibility.



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CARL E. DUCKETT

Deputy Director

for

Science and Technology

Attachment - 1

As stated

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SIGNATURE RECOMMENDED:

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Director of Special Activities

15 March 1973

Date

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SAS/O/OSA: [redacted] (13 March 1973)

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ATTACHMENT

- I. ASSETS
- II. AGREEMENTS
- III. UNIQUE POINTS
- IV. POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS
- V. RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

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III. The following points are considered unique to the IDEALIST operation. Of note is the fact that the present arrangement permits the responsiveness so vital in critical and urgent situations and the flexibility necessary for a variety of tasks.

A. The command chain to alert and execute IDEALIST operations in support of national requirements is very short (e.g. DCI to DDS&T to OSA). This is a key consideration, and permits preparations to be made for a deployment while awaiting the actual decision to execute the mission.

B. The U-2 remains an integral part of the CIA scientific and technical development and testing capability. Initially, U.S. activities in overhead reconnaissance were concentrated in the U-2 program. As new collection systems were added to this effort, the scientific and technical requirements and uses were expanded. The advent of satellites introduced a wider scope of operations and generated more specific requirements. This increasing activity resulted in separate organizations to collect, analyze and interpret data. The thread connecting OSA and OEL, OSP, ORD, OSI and FMSAC remains strong and provides continuous interplay between the collection activity

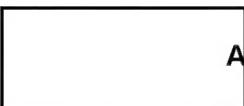
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Page 3

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and the determination of new requirements as well as the development of new intercept systems. The synergism of this collective effort is characterized by the ability to identify requirements, develop collection systems and employ these devices rapidly. For example, all films, currently used in overhead satellite programs were initially tested and proven in the U-2.

C. It is essential that U-2 assets remain available to the U.S. in the future. Due to the relationships outlined above, OSA can fully exploit the development capabilities of various Agency scientific and technical components to continue to push

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to maintain a viable U-2 program. Given the uncertainties of budget constraints, the intense competition for scarce defense dollars in a non-war time situation, the consolidation of U-2's under USAF may tend to obscure the unique capabilities of this aircraft when competing with hard requirements for new weapon systems for primary defense of the U.S. A small force of U-2's, maintained by CIA in the latest operational/R&D mode as the sole mission of a unit outside of the Air

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Page 4

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Force, appears to be less vulnerable to these types of pressures, and should be retained. The recent improvement of the "H" camera represents the state-of-the-art in optics. It is the only available sensor capable of obtaining high resolution and acuity from standoff distances up to 50 NM or greater.

D. System and aircraft maintenance is performed by contract personnel supplied by the manufacturer of the equipment. This gains long term stability and avoids the need for continuous training. Systems are thus kept "peaked" even though not required for a specific mission. Because of this, SAC U-2's are flight tested and certified by CIA after any major work involving EWS has been performed.

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Page 5

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IV. POSSIBLE APPLICATIONS:

A. Because these aircraft are maintained in an operationally ready status, at least one is available for crisis response at all times. The operating unit maintains mobility kits and has deployment plans for all contingencies.

1. They may be used to ascertain that agreements or truces are being carried out in accord with accepted terms when other collection methods are not available in a timely manner. [REDACTED]

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Page 6

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2. The assets could make significant contributions to the reconnaissance effort to monitor the SEA cease fire agreement through supplementation of Air Force coverage with standoff photography of North Vietnam. In the event a decision is made to reduce the military influence, these assets are capable of combining flexible tasking with optimum weather opportunities throughout SEA.
3. In other areas of the world not normally considered unfriendly or hostile to U.S. interest the situation may change such as occurred in Cuba in 1962. Today, the U-2R can operate over 50% of the earth's land mass with no chance of detection. An additional 15% can be overflown with no possibility of hostile reaction.

B. The U-2 can be used to monitor areas of potential conflict such

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intelligence data may not always be accessible, the knowledge of an attempt to gather intelligence usually accrues credit for having achieved results. This credit could be a factor in changing the actions of belligerent parties if it is felt their intentions have been compromised.

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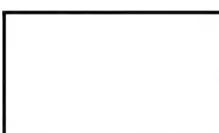
- Unique contracting channels and working arrangements allow minimal time for identification of requirement to operational equipment.

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film and processing improvement. Currently, all films used have been tested in this program.

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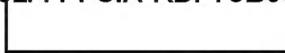
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Page 9

- Provides flight test of all U-2 aircraft

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systems interface. SAC systems are tested and certified
after modification or IRAN before returning to USAF.

- Pilot training for all CIA pilots

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- Regular [Redacted box] ELINT and photo coverage along coastal

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China.

- Obtained high resolution photography of Ft. Bayard shipping
following U.S. mining of North Vietnam harbors. "H" camera
was used from approximately 40 NM standoff position to
avoid approaching nearer the PRC coast than the current
25 NM restriction.



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Page 4

SUBJECT: Personnel Reduction

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8. I am well aware that there have been numerous questions raised as to the reduction or elimination of the IDEALST Program and the resultant personnel savings. On the basis of recent discussions with you and the Director, we are currently preparing a paper for the 40 Committee which will be available to the DCI in the event he wishes to raise this issue. I see no possibility, however, that the IDEALST issue can be resolved in time to have any impact on this exercise. Obviously, if a negative decision were taken on IDEALST, the reduction in ceiling would be on an order of [redacted] positions. I would note, however, that given the overall tight government ceiling, there is a distinct possibility that elimination of a program of this magnitude would result in an equal reduction in the overall Agency ceiling.

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[redacted]
Carl E. Duckett
Deputy Director
for
Science and Technology

Note: Excerpt from Memo for ExDir-Compt from CED (22 Dec 72).

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